

## **Maryland Public Art Commission Meeting Minutes**

**April 23, 2020**

By Conference Call 9:00-10:30 AM

**Attendees:** Tom Ridford, Ken Skrzysz, Liesel Fenner, Rosa Chang, Ryan Patterson, Elizabeth Hughes, Catherine Leggett, Rand Griffin, Molline Jackson, Leslie Kahn, Anne Klase, Kathy O'Dell Ph.D., Liling Tien, Rodney Tissue

Commissioners introduced themselves over the phone and gave personal updates on life and work during Covid-19.

Catherine called the meeting to order at 9:21 am and requested approval of the minutes from 2-24-2020. Rodney Tissue motioned to approve the minutes and Elizabeth Hughes seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

Ken updated the Commission on MSAC's work and response to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Day to day business has continued, with staff working from home and holding meetings three times a week. The organization committed to moving all of its files online three years prior and that choice has served well to make the transition to working remotely very smooth.

MSAC has held three public listening sessions attended by more than 250 people to recommend priorities and actions to be taken by MSAC and our partners. Consistent encouragement has been provided to direct artists to think of themselves as entrepreneurs and arts organizations to consider themselves small businesses.

Anticipate distributing \$1M across the state from MSAC and NEA funds. All applicants are asked to demonstrate anticipated funding from federal and state loans. For almost all grant programs matching requirements have been removed to allow organizations to carry out their work without having to worry about providing the cash match.

Three recurring virtual communities were established 1) Tuesday morning Coffee with Ken virtual meetings 2) We have held 14 "Creative Conversations", discipline related listening/update spaces that allowed for peer to peer sharing and recommendations 3) a new Professional Development series focused on responsive topics including post-Covid-19 season planning, applying for emergency relief funds, and self care. In all, these sessions have seen participation from over 1,000 constituents thus far.

Common thread that runs through all sessions includes encouragement to look ahead and re-vision the future of the arts in Maryland. The Maryland Arts Summit moving online, and being reframed as responsive to the situation we are in now.

A Statewide Arts Task Force is being formed and asked to focus on actionable items including encouraging collaboration, new funding, virtual as well as in-person engagement, and reopening arts campaign to strengthen the arts resurgence. The proposed deadline for the Task Force to advance its action items is May 20.

Catherine thanked Ken for the update and complimented MSAC's ability to move quickly and engage the public in the organization's response to the crisis.

Catherine reported on the work of the Executive Committee, noting that the committee has met a number of times. It has become clear that the Commission needs a vice-chair and recommends Rand for this position. Molline Jackson, offered support of the recommendation. Catherine motioned to nominate Rand as Vice Chair, Kathy approved motion. Rodney Tissue seconded the motion. Rand Griffin was elected Vice Chair of Maryland Public Art Commission

Liesel noted that Commissioner Liling Tien will be stepping down in the new fiscal year. The Executive Committee asked for recommendations to fill the position and Liesel offers two candidates:

- Mide Akinsade, an architect in private practice from Baltimore City
- Judy Kwon, a former public art administrator, and consultant currently working for the Smithsonian Museums, and resident of Anne Arundel County

Liesel noted that there will likely be an additional opening within the next 12 months if Rodney Tissue steps down when he retires.

Catherine asked Liesel for direction on how to fill the opening. Liesel stated that it is important to have designers on the Commission. Mide's expertise and contribution as a designer was very helpful on our UMB project, and he is very knowledgeable about public art. Judy is very knowledgeable as well and she has provided very cogent questions and observations to the Public Art Across Maryland grant review program. Liesel also noted that the Commission does not currently include a representative from Baltimore City.

Rand noted that if there is another opening anticipated we should definitely keep Judy in mind and perhaps invite her to an upcoming meeting. Catherine made a recommendation to move forward with Mide, unless there is further discussion. Hearing none, Catherine confirmed that staff should proceed with recommending Mide Akinsade is appointed to replace Liling Tien on the Commission.

Elizabeth Hughes described the recent work of the group of editors who worked on revisions to the Public Art Program Guidelines and establishing guidelines for a forthcoming Public Art Conservation Grant. The review and consideration of the addition of a Conservation Grant included practical thinking about how the program will work and be responsive to needs. The Conservation Grant will provide much needed funding for conservation that does not currently exist and fills a need for public art programs across the state.

Liesel Fenner pointed out the grant will make available up to \$50,000 for communities to conserve damaged and orphaned artworks. Modeled on the PAAM grant program it will also offer funding for conservators to make an assessment of works in need of conservation.

Tom Riford, Deputy Secretary of Commerce joined the call.

Tom provided a general update from the State level. Tom noted that the Department of Commerce is taking a hard look at what recovery looks like across the state's businesses including the sectors of Tourism and the Arts.

Liesel introduced a new list of CIP projects eligible for public art. A priority is to identify who will serve as an MPAC representative on the Artist Selection Committee for each project.

Commissioners volunteered to serve on the following projects:

- Rand Griffen for “MPT Studio A”
- Catherine Leggett for “Morgan State University New Student Service Center”
- Elizabeth Hughes for “Dept. of Agriculture Salisbury Animal Hospital”

Ken suggested that MPAC may look to MSAC Councilors to represent them on MPAI projects in jurisdictions without MPAC representation. The Commission appreciated this suggestion and requested an MSAC Councilor for the UMES School of Pharmacy and Allied Health project.

Liesel and Ryan are continuing to request and gather updates on each MPAI project, including design status and timeline. It is reasonable to anticipate that there may be spending restrictions for some projects in future fiscal years given the economic shortfall associated with Covid-19.

In closing, Catherine thanked Liesel and staff for staying focused and moving things forward, “We appreciate that now and in the past. You keep us focused on moving forward and making progress”.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:08 am.